

REMARKS

The Examiner's communication dated January 10, 2007 has been received and carefully considered. In conformance with the applicable statutory requirements, this paper constitutes a complete reply and/or a bona fide attempt to advance the application to allowance. Specifically, claims 1, 9, 12-14 and 24 have been amended. In addition, detailed arguments in support of patentability are presented. Reexamination and/or reconsideration of the application as amended are respectfully requested.

Summary of the Office Action

Claims 1, 9-12 and 13-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Bobeczko et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,557,742).

Claims 1, 9-12 and 13-14 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Gilliland (U.S. Patent No. 5,370,290).

Claims 2-5 and 15-18 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gilliland in view of Sanda et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,851,644).

Claims 6-8 and 19-24 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Gilliland in view of McBride (U.S. Patent No. 3,756,760).

Claims Distinguish Patentably Over the Reference(s) of Record

Amended **Claim 1** calls for a drive roller comprising a hub rotatably received on a wire feeding mechanism, the hub having an outer surface. The drive roller of claim 1 further comprises a wear resistant plating on the hub's outer surface. In rejecting previously presented claim 1, the Examiner indicates that Bobeczko discloses a wire feeding mechanism comprising a drive roller 34 including a hub having an outer surface 50 and a coating 36 on the outer surface 50. *See page 2 of the Office Action.* The Examiner further indicates that the wire feeding mechanism of Bobeczko comprises "the plating 36..." *See page 3 of the Office Action.*

As discussed in detail in Applicant's previous responses, Bobeczko discloses a drive roller 34 including a hub 35 and a flexible outer cover 36. Bobeczko states the following in reference to the outer cover 36:

Cover 36 is made from a material having a relatively low compressive yield strength, preferably plastic or rubber, so that the cover and thus outside surface 48 thereof will deflect or deform and thus conform to the cross-sectional contour of a wire W in response to the compressive forces generated as the wire extends between opposing drive rollers 34, as is illustrated with respect to one of the rollers in FIG. 5A.

(Col. 8, lines 24-31). The purpose for adding the flexible cover 36 to the drive roller 34 is also disclosed in Bobeczko et al. as follows:

Such conformity increases surface area contact and support between the drive rollers and the wire thus promoting the desired frictional force to advance the wire, and also eliminates the deformation of wire resulting from the use of steel rollers as shown in FIG. 10A and discussed above.

(Col. 8, lines 31-36).

Responding to Applicant's arguments concerning Bobeczko and its lack of a plating, the Examiner states the following in the most recent Office Action:

In regards [to the, sic] argument that the word plating does not encompass a rubber or plastic material as disclosed by Bobeczko, the subject application defines plating as being a plating or coating on page 4 of the specification. Plating is [sic] does not mean nor is it defined as meaning a hard metal. Plastic would be encompassed by plating or coating. The Applicant argues that there is no recitation on page f [sic] of plating "being a plating or a coating." However, as noted by the applicant, line 28 of page 4 states in the alternative "one of a plate and a coating on the outer surface." The definition in the specification along with the Modern Language definition of plating as a covering of metal, plastic, glass, or similar hard material, and Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary definition's of plating is to cover with an adherent layer mechanically, chemically or electrically, a layer of plastic as taught by the prior art would be encompassed by plating or coating.

Office Action at pgs. 5-6.

Applicant continues to argue that Bobeczko fails to disclose or fairly suggest a plating on a drive roller. While there is disclosure of a "flexible outer cover 36" that is "preferably plastic or rubber," there is no disclosure of a **plating** in Bobeczko. Thus, Applicant continues to assert that the word or limitation "plating" does not encompass, read upon, or remotely connote a flexible rubber or plastic material as disclosed or fairly suggested by Bobeczko. Applicant simply asserts that a plating, as recited in claim 1, is not a flexible cover, as disclosed or fairly suggested by Bobeczko.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, claim 1 has been amended such that the recited plating is now indicated as being a wear resistant plating. It is respectfully submitted that no wear resistant plating is taught nor fairly suggested by Bobeczko et al. As already mentioned, the cover 36 in Bobeczko is a flexible outer cover which is preferably formed of plastic or rubber. Support for this amendment is provided at least on page 8 of the subject application, at lines 4+, which state "the plating or coating 60 increases the useful life of each of the drive rollers 36-42 by increasing the wear resistance of the drive rollers and increasing the period of time in which the drive rollers can be used before the surfaces of the drive rollers degrade." It is respectfully asserted that the flexible cover 36 disclosed in Bobeczko could result in a drive roller that would wear faster over time and require replacement or refurbishment much earlier than would the drive roller of claim 1.

Claim 1 was also rejected as being anticipated by Gilliland. In particular, the Examiner indicates that Gilliland discloses a wire feeding mechanism comprising a drive roller 22a,22b wherein each drive roller includes a hub having an outer surface (Figure 2A,2B) extending circumferentially about the roller axis and a coating (Col. 4, lines 3-5) on the outer surface. Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner review the cited column and line number of Gilliland with reference to Figure 1 of the Gilliland patent. In particular, Col. 4, lines 3-5, provides as follows:

wire guide 13 is conveniently made of spring steel, with a nylon or Teflon inner liner to reduce friction between the wire 11 and the wire guide 13.

Referring to Figure 1, the Gilliland patent is specifically discussing the composition of wire guide 13 not drive rollers 22a,22b. Accordingly, Applicant submits that the Examiner is mistaken in asserting that Gilliland teaches a plating on the drive rollers 22a,22b, much less a wear resistant plating.

Accordingly, for the forgoing reasons, Applicant respectfully asserts that claim 1 and claims 2-11 dependent therefrom are in condition for allowance.

Dependent **claim 9** has been amended to call for the wear resistant plating of claim 1 to be substantially inflexible and nondeforming. Applicant respectfully asserts that this further patentably defines over the applied Bobeczko reference. More specifically, Bobeczko teaches a flexible outer cover 36 on drive roller 34 that is made from a material having a relatively low compressive yield strength, preferably plastic or rubber, so that the

cover in the outside surface 48 thereof will deflect or deform and thus conform to the cross-sectional contour of a wire W in response to the compressive forces generated as the wire extends between opposing drive rollers 34, as is illustrated with respect to one of the drive rollers in Figure 5a. See *Col. 8, lines 24-31*. Thus, Applicant asserts that Gilliland is directed to a drive roller 34 having a cover 36 that is specifically designed to be flexible and deforming, which is exactly opposite the wear resistant plating called for in claim 9.

Claim 12, as amended, calls for a drive roller comprising a hub having an axis and an outer surface extending circumferentially about the axis and further comprises a substantially inflexible plating on the outer surface extending circumferentially thereabout. Like claim 1, claim 12 was rejected as anticipated over each of Bobeczko and Gilliland. It is respectfully submitted that amended claim 12 patentably defines over the applied references.

More particularly, the recitation of a substantially inflexible plating is not disclosed or fairly suggested in Bobeczko. Rather, as already discussed herein, Bobeczko discloses a flexible outer cover 36 being provided on a drive roller 34 wherein the flexible outer cover is preferably formed of plastic or rubber. More particularly, the cover is made from a material having relatively low compressive yield strength so that the cover in this outside surface thereof will deflect or deform. See *Col. 8, lines 24-27 of Gilliland*.

As with claim 1, Applicant respectfully submits that the application of Gilliland in rejecting claim 12 is improper. The Examiner's indication that Gilliland teaches a coating or a plating on drive roller 22a or 22b, and particularly the citation of Col. 4, lines 3-5, is incorrect. As already discussed herein, the cited section of Gilliland is directed to a wire guide 13 not drive rollers 22a, 22b.

For all the foregoing reasons, Applicant respectfully submits that claim 12 and claims 15-21, which are dependent claim 12, are in condition for allowance.

Dependent **claim 22** was rejected over the combination of Gilliland and McBride. Applicant respectfully asserts that such rejection is improper because dependent claim 22 is dependent from claim 18 which was rejected over a different combination of references (Gilliland and Sanda). In other words, the current rejection of claim 22 fails to address the limitation of claim 18, the parent claim to claim 22, which calls for the plating to have a thickness of about 0.0004 inches to about 0.0006 inches. Accordingly, Applicant

respectfully asserts that claim 22 and claim 23 which is dependent from claim 22 are further patentably distinguishable over the applied references.

Claim 24 has been placed in independent form. Claim 24 includes the limitations of parent claims 12, 15-18 and 22. It is respectfully asserted that claim 24 is in condition for allowance. More particularly, like dependent claim 22 discussed in the preceding paragraph, previously presented claim 24, previously presented as a dependent claim, was rejected over the combination of Gilliland and McBride but other limitations of the parent claims of previously presented claim 24 were rejected over an entirely different combination. For at least this reason, Applicant respectfully asserts that the previous rejection of claim 24 is improper and is equally improper as to newly presented independent claim 24.

Claim 13 calls for a wire feeding mechanism comprising a drive roller which includes a hub having an outer surface and one of a substantially nondeforming plating and a hardened coating on said outer surface. Like claims 1 and 12, previously presented claim 13 was rejected as anticipated over each of Bobeczko and Gilliland. Bobeczko teaches a flexible cover 36 on a drive roller 34 that is specifically provided for deforming when contacted by a wire. In contrast, amended claim 13 calls for one of a substantially nondeforming plating and a hardened coating. Applicant respectfully asserts that amended claim 13 patentably defines over the references of record.


The Examiner's rejection of claim 13 as being anticipated by Gilliland is improper for the same reasons as discussed in reference to claims 1 and 12. In particular, the cited section of Gilliland provides teachings relevant to a wire guide 13 and does not provide any teaching of a substantially nondeforming plating or a hardened coating on a drive roller, such as disclosed drive rollers 22a and 22b in Gilliland.

CONCLUSION

All formal and informal matters having been addressed, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. It is believed that the claim changes clearly place the application in condition for allowance, defining over any fair teaching attributable to the references of record. Alternatively, if the Examiner is of the view that the application is not in clear condition for allowance, it is requested that the Examiner telephone the undersigned for purposes of conducting a telephone interview to resolve any outstanding differences. Accordingly, an early notice of allowance is earnestly solicited.

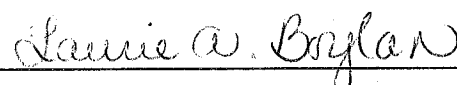
Respectfully submitted,

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March 29, 2007

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